

Message Text

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TO USDEL MTN GENEVA

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FOL TEL SENT ACTION SECSTATE FROM MANILA DTD 14 FEB 1976 QUOTE

LIMITED OFFICIAL USE MANILA 2242

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: ETRD, RP

SUBJECT: ECONOMIC NEGOTIATIONS

REF: MANILA 1530

1. AMBASSADOR, ACCOMPANIED BY E/C COUNSELOR, DISCUSSED SUBJECT AT SOME LENGTH WITH FINANCE SECRETARY VIRATA AND AMB WILFREDO VEGA OF DEPARTMENT OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS ON FEB 12. VIRATA REPEATED HIS CONCERN THAT NEGOTIATIONS WITH U.S. IN ELECTION YEAR MIGHT BECOME POLITICIZED, WHILE VEGA TOOK POSITION THAT GOP NEEDED TO HAVE SOME FAIRLY CLEAR INDICATION OF U.S. FLEXIBILITY BEFORE UNDERTAKING MAJOR EFFORT OF FIELDING SENIOR TEAM OF OFFICIALS FOR WASHINGTON NEGOTIATIONS. DISCUSSION APPEARED TO ALLAY THESE CONCERNS, AND VIRATA EVENTUALLY AGREED SERIOUSLY TO CONSIDER NEGOTIATIONS WITHIN EXT FEW MONTHS. HE SAID EMBASSY COULD EXPECT TO RECEIVE REPLY TO ITS NOTE OF JAN 9 IN NEAR FUTURE.

2. IN EARLIER SEPARATE CONVERSATION WITH E/C COUNSELOR, VEGA TOOK POSITION THAT HE WOULD HAVE

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TO BE SATISFIED THAT U.S. WOULD BE IN POSITION TO

MAKE CONCESSIONS, PARTICULARLY IN AREA OF TROPICAL
HARDWOODS AND COCONUT OIL, BEFORE HE COULD RECOMMEND
THAT GOP PROCEED WITH NEGOTIATIONS. HE SAID
HE PLANNED TO TRAVEL TO WASHINGTON SOMETIME IN EARLY
MARCH, AT WHICH TIME HE HOPED TO GAIN BETTER
VIEW OF U.S. POSITION. HE SAID HE WOULD ALSO WISH
TO DISCUSS WITH U.S. OFFICIALS WHAT U.S. MIGHT BE
PREPARED TO GIVE IN GROUP I AND II IN CONTEXT OF
GATT TROPICAL PRODUCTS NEGOTIATIONS. HE SAID HE
WOULD APPRECIATE ANY ADVANCE INDICATION OF U.S.
POSITION PRIOR TO HIS DEPARTURE, SINCE HE FELT THAT
THIS PLUS SOME OUTLINE OF WHAT U.S. MIGHT EXPECT TO
RECEIVE WOULD HELP GOP IN MAKING DECISION WITH
RESPECT TO NEGOTIATIONS AND IN PREPARING SUGGESTED
AGENDA. SULLIVAN UNQTE INGERSOLL

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